



Mabel Rock

GROTON - News of the death of Mabel Rock brought a feeling of keen sorrow to Groton folks, especially those of the older generation.

She had lived in Groton since November 15, 1919, nearly 69 years. *born July 10, 1908*

Mabel was one of six children born to Joe and Johanna Mathieu and the last surviving of that pioneer family, who homesteaded on land which later became Rondell Township.

Stratford came into being when the Minneapolis and St. Louis railroad was built shortly after the turn of the century and it became her home town. She attended high school there and along with Dagna Walgren Miller were the first women to graduate from that school in the class of 1918.

Mabel's interests while going to school in Stratford went beyond the books. While there, she met the local car dealer, a man named Bill Rock, who sold the Mathieu family their first automobile, a Studebaker. There is no record of how many demo rides Mabel and Bill took before her father bought that Studebaker, but they were united in marriage October 1, 1919.

Shortly thereafter, Bill and Mabel along with Milo and Hattie Cook formed the Groton Auto and Tractor Company. The business

was active in the retailing of cars, trucks and farm machinery in addition to farming interests. This company was affiliated with Chevrolet and Oldsmobile Divisions of General Motors until 1963 when the Cooks sold their shares to the Rocks. When Bill died in 1970, Mabel became president of Groton Auto and Tractor Company which is still active in farming and real estate in the Groton area.

Mabel had been a witness to great change in her lifetime as the nation transitioned from an agrarian to an industrial and now to a service economy. She never lost faith in Groton, in South Dakota or agriculture. She developed a broad philosophical view of life based on positive thinking. This made her a delightful companion to those who knew her and had the pleasure of being in her company. Family and friends will agree that Mabel saw something good in every person and every situation.

One of Mabel's recent highlights was her 90th birthday celebration where family and friends honored her. By executive proclamation, Governor George Mickelson proclaimed July 10 as Mabel Rock Day in South Dakota. Mabel, not being too be-partisan, thought that proclamation to be one of the Governor's better accomplishments of this term.

Good health, by and large, was her portion of life and until recently she drove her Buick to get the mail and shop at Ken's.

After a short hospitalization at St. Luke's in Aberdeen, she died of heart failure. Mabel maintained her strength and dignity till the very end. *passed away Oct 4, 1988*

She is survived by three sons, Mathieu B. Rock, Aberdeen, William H. Rock, Jr., Minneapolis, Minn., and John D. Rock, Holly, Mich.; one daughter, Mrs. Bill (Vera Jean) Dean, Ramona, Calif.; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at the United Methodist Church in Groton where friends and family paid last loving tribute.